(c) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Substantial part of Gir forest is notified as national park and sanctuary. Central Government provides financial assistance for management of the area on scientific lines and to control poaching of wild animals under the scheme "Development of national parks and sanctuaries". These efforts have improved the population status of various species of wild animals including that of lion, the population of lions has increased from 304 lions in 1995 to 327 lions in May, 2001.

Funds for maintenance of lakes and rivers

1822. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government provided funds for maintenance and beautification of various lakes and rivers including Majuli Island in Assam during the last three years; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the achievements made in this regard during the same period?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The State Government of Assam has not submitted any proposal for maintenance and beautification of any lake or river for consideration under the ongoing programmes of National Lake Conservation Plan or National River Conservation Plan. A preparatory grant of US $ 20,000 has been approved by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in October, 2001 for declaration of Majuli Islands as Cultural Landscape Site. Department of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, is preparing detailed dossier in this regard.

Status of endangered species

1823. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had directed the Zoological Survey of India during 1987 to conduct survey to find out the status of endangered species,

as reported in the Hindu dated 12th April, 2002;

(b) if so, whether the ZSI has not made any serious efforts to complete the task, till date;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the further steps taken by Government to complete the projects?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The Government of India had directed ZSI in 1987 to conduct and complete the status survey of endangered 81 species of mammals, 47 of birds, 15 of reptiles, 3 of amphibians and a large number of butterflies, moths and beetles. The studies on status survey of 11 endangered species have already been completed. Further, studies on 3 more endangered species (Chinkara, Desert Cat, Western Tragopan) have recently been completed. In addition to this, studies on 9 species (Birgus latro, Kiang, Himalayan marmot, Lion tailed Macaque, Rhesus Macaque, Hanuman Langur, Nilgiril Thar, Irawady Dolphin, Giant Squirrel) are in progress. Efforts have already been made as indicated above and the project is progressing.

Tiger Trail to stop poaching

1824. PFOF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that under the Tiger Trail a unique programme, Government have stopped poaching in Periyar Tiger Reserve;

(b) if so, the details of the programme; and

(c) whether Government would implement the same in other States also where forest land is in abundance?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The "Periyar Tiger Trail" Programme is an Eco-tourism initiate developed in Periyar Tiger Rserve under the India Eco-development Project, which gives visitors to the park rewarding experience through the services of local unemployed youths, who are fully conversant with the park. This project has reprotedly reduced poaching in the area.

(c) Government of India is fostering such site-specific eco-tourism models as part of eco-development around Protected Areas.